GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:225
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007
ANTI SATELLITE TESTS BY CHINA
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Government has expressed concern over the recent anti-satellite tests conducted by China;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the technological tests conducted by China has threatened civilian space programmes of the country;

(d) if so, whether the Indian Government has taken up this matter with the Chinese Government;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Indian Government at the international level to check the militarisation of space and the outcome of these steps?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) to (f) A statement is placed on the Table of the house.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (F) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 225 REGARDING 'ANTI SATELLITE TESTS BY CHINA' FOR ANSWER ON 14/03/2007 On 11 January 2007, China destroyed one of their inactive weather satellites in polar orbit with kinetic impact using a ballistic missile. The test has increased the quantity of space debris in low earth orbit. However, no damage has been observed so far on any Indian satellite. The Chinese Foreign Ministry confirmed the test on 23 January 2007 while reiterating China's commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space.

2. The subject came up in discussions during Chinese Foreign Minister Mr. Li Zhaoxing's visit to India from February 11-14, 2007. The Chinese side stressed that China was against weaponisation of outer space and that their test was of purely technological and scientific significance and not directed against any country. In response India's principled opposition to the weaponisation of space was conveyed and it was underlined that it was essential to preserve the longstanding international consensus on peaceful uses of outer space.

3. Government believe that this consensus could be undermined by continuation of such testing or deployment of weapons in outer space. The security and safety of assets in outer space is today of crucial importance for global economic and social development. It should become the responsibility of every nation to maintain outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes and guard it as the common, peaceful heritage of mankind. Government has called upon all states to redouble efforts to strengthen the international legal regime for the peaceful uses of outer space. Government will continue to be closely engaged with the multilateral effort towards keeping outer space free of weapons.